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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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A-ONE #0135

10/29/99

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-* Intel Unveils 15 New Pentium Processors! *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

I realize that I probably do this fairly regularly; and, it probably annoys some people (it does me at times!), but I cannot believe it's the end of October already! Where does time go?? Boy, I could really get philosophical here, but I won't!

I hope everyone is ready for the deluge of "trick 'o' treaters" this weekend! Great Halloween costume suggestion: Jack Tramiel or Bill Gates! What a great time of year, though. I can't wait to see what kinds of ghosts and goblins visit us this weekend! A reminder - if you're out driving this weekend, watch out for the kids at night! Have a safe and enjoyable All Hallows Eve! And don't forget to set your clocks forward one hour this weekend, for Daylight Savings!

Until next time...

MagiC Online Update

From: Bengy <bengy@atari.org>

Hi All,

Just a quick note to let everyone know important information about certain issues:

I moved to a different city and currently don't have a computer, I'm saving up from each paycheque though, so MagiC online will reopen at that time, it shouldn't be too long, perhaps 1 month-1 1/2 more months.

The main thing I wanted to clear up was about the MagiC Game Contest, it is of course still running, but I must say only because of Jan Daldrup.. wow, I can't thank him enough for the work he's put into the project, and the nicest thing about it is that I didn't even have to ask him, he just voluntarily took over where I left off! One thing that concerned me was I saw a message saying that someone made a game for the MGC but had already released it.. Remember all, if you do make a game for the MGC, it Cant be released until the official release date.. these rules are on the MGC homepage.

Anyway, I'm typing this at the public library which is "strictly for research" so the librarians are giving me evil looks :) I'll be back online in no time, and i'll make an announcement then.

Take Care,
Bengy

About Email, Unfortunately My Email account choked (it only has a limit of 200 emails, and at approx. 100 emails a week it didn't last long.) So if you

sent me something and it bounced back, thats why! :)

Alta Lista Updated to v2.6

Alta Lista, HTML and image catalogizer, has been updated to v2.6. This release features new colour icons (up to 256 colours) which replace the old monochrome ones. The dialogs got a new look and some not yet available features have been disabled. Alta Lista can also be used to see how a HTML page will appear in a web search engine because the program behaves almost like the popular Alta Vista search engine.

The main program is completely in English language, an extensive ST-Guide hypertext is - along with many other features - planned for v3.0 which will be released later this year.

<http://www.atari-computer.de/mjaap/prg/>

New Centurbo II updates & Phenix 060 news

You can download the new versions of CENTscreen, CECILE 2.18, CBOOT, PUTFLASH and FLASH.BIN for CT2 and the demo version of SANDRINE.

We signal you that the versions 2.15 and 2.16 of CECILE contain a bug that may affect the CD-Rom software. Please change your CECILE if you have one of these numbers.

We recall you that it is important to update all this programs together or you may have some bad problems!

We have yet 14 CT2 in stock. Join the club of the 241-14= 227 users...

The Phenix R1 (prototype) goes to the Rev. A (Developer version).

The principal modification concerns the add of the two PS/2 ports for standard Keyboard and mouse, because it seems that the USB keyboard doesn't seriously appear on the market.

It will be possible to connect all models of keyboard and mouse on the Phenix 060 with most attractive prices.

A new features list is on the site. Same thing with a new functional diagram that is now presented as normalized ('north' and 'south bridge' terms).

The Phenix 060 is now ready to be produce in a small quantity for the developers.

Don't hesitate to contact us to encourage or for remarks.

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FRANCE
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WEB : <http://www.centek.fr>

Atari Freeware from Japan

From: Kevin Savetz <savetz@northcoast.com>

Here you can find some quality freeware for Atari ST family of computers. Especially midi and Japanese font oriented utilities.

<http://www.geocities.co.jp/SiliconValley/9164/efreesoft.html>

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->A-ONE User Group Notes!   - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
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AVC Meetings Update

Here are the remaining dates for the Chicago area Atari Video Club:

November 7th time 1:30pm till 4:30pm at Westchester Public Library in Westchester, IL (I'll be bringing my Fest'99 video and Pac-man fever CD, but I will need somebody to bring a VCR, and jaguar CD, and a TV; I can't bring my stuff) Also plans for next year will be discussed at this meeting.

December 5th time 1:30pm till 4:30pm at Westchester Public Library in Westchester, IL. (final meeting at this location; plans will for next year will be discussed)

Please RSVP a week before the meeting (by e-mail) so I could tell you the address and directions.(please tell me your address too so I could give you the directions from your place to the meeting place)

Our next net meeting:

The next Atari Video Club net meeting will take place at the Atari Video Club Chat room located at <http://jupiter.beseen.com/chat/rooms/i/1858>. and
ICQ

The date of the meeting is 11/13/99

This a special net meeting where you get ask questions to a special guest. This months guest is Scott Walters the man behind the BJL and the invention that will make unencrypted game work on non-modified jaguars.

The meeting is scheduled to take place at 5pm central time and end around 7pm central time. (for those who don't own ICQ use the web chat room to ask your questions and I'll relay them to scott (who will be on ICQ) this will be moderated meeting.

Daniel M. Iacovelli
AVC Chairperson
Editor of the Atari Zone Fanzine and E-zine
E-mail: AtariVideoClub@angefire.com
(ICQ #14050168)

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, old man winter just sent one of his younger nephews to visit me. One chilly morning can be dismissed as an anomaly, but three mornings of frost in a row can mean only one thing... winter is well and truly on its way. Now don't get me wrong, I love winter. I love cold weather, I love snow (as long as I don't have to shovel it), and I love the holidays.

Most of the people I know hate the cold and would do anything to get away from it. Their reasoning eludes me. I'd much rather have cold weather than hot weather. I mean, after all, you can always throw on another blanket or a sweater if you're too cold, but what exactly do you wear when you're too hot??

I guess I'll have to just come to terms with the fact that not everyone has a logical mind like mine. <grin>

Y'know, there's really not enough of that going around these days. The coming to terms with the simple fact that not everyone has to think the same way, I mean.

As far as some are concerned, if you don't conform to their ideas you're anti-something. I get the sneaking suspicion that they're afraid that you're anti-THEM. Truth be told, I probably am anti-them. I have a hard time cutting someone slack when they won't cut anyone else any.

So... while we're all mulling over what the heck I was trying to point out why don't we just take a look at what's being said on the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st Newsgroup
=====

Willard VanderPloeg tells us about his success with GEMulator, the ST emulator for PCs:

"I've got Gemulator running perfect - but have found that ONLY TOS 1.4 renamed to tos.img on the root of C is found.

My machine also seems to want a floppy in A to boot Gemulator right."

Andy Morgan tells Willard:

"This is all I needed to do too, then all of a sudden gemulator found the TOS and runs in ST mode.

> My machine also seems to want a floppy in A to boot Gemulator right.

Mine does too [wants a floppy in Drive A] , but after searching the drive boots ok.

I haven't had a chance to play with gemulator much yet - what already bugs me though is that if the focus is on gemulator, the mouse only works within the emulation screen, making gemulator impossible to turn off by normal methods (I have to kill it using the task manager). Is this right???"

Lewis Simcox adds his own little secret:

"I edited the .ini file to boot from partition Z. That where my ZIP drive is. Gemulator set up on a ZIP disk works fine."

Someone mentions the following (sorry, I've lost the name and address of who it was):

"I have an AUTO folder on C:\ with a program called WINSIZER.PRG. This utility allows the 800x600 res to be selected at startup."

Ben Hall asks:

"Where can I find this..?"

(Gemulator worked fine for me first time - at last an ST emulator that can be used for some real work!)"

Roger Cain tells Ben:

"It's in the release archive of the FREE (June 98) of Gemulator (on Darek's site)... or I could mail it to you if you don't have this to hand.

Eeeeeee 'eck, what am I doing wrong? There's you and Gerry O'Rourke as happy as sandboys and me always crashing out at the first attempt to display an emulated ST screen!"

Ben tells Roger:

"Well, I got a copy of TOS 2.06 and lo and behold: big screens now work!

ST Mono resolutions work nice and fast - I did 800x600 no problems.

The colour resolutions also work, although are a lot slower (again, some fiddling with the parameters is probably necessary), but I do have a fairly slow PC by modern standards.

So, it can be done!"

"Galen" adds:

"I've been unable to post for a few days, but I'm glad you figured it out. Higher resolutions were added in TOS 2, TOS 1.x only truly understands the basic 3 resolutions (some exceptions apply, as always)."

Andy Morgan tells Galen:

"I can see I'm getting deeply into RTFM territory here, but how do you define the screen size? I've got TOS 2,06 but renamed to Magic.os - what do I have to tweak and where?"

Ben tells everyone:

"This works for me: stick WINSIZER.PRG (which is contained in the Gemulator 98 archive) into the AUTO folder. When the "ST" boots, a menu comes up asking you to select a screen size (Normal, 640x480, 800x600 and so on)

I can have up to 1024x768 mono on this 17inch monitor, and it still runs faster than my normal ST, which is quite remarkable...

Anyone know if Magic 2.01 supports larger screen sizes - I would have thought it would do, but so far it won't work..."

Kasper Guaka asks for info on using and Atari TT:

"I just found another Atari at the dump: a TT030!

It came with a keyboard, and luckily I still have 2 Atari mice. I tried a VGA monitor with it, and that's okay, but I want to run Cubase on it, and that's not working. Some way I need to get the monochrome mode (?) working. Would it be possible to connect a SM124 to it?

I'd also like to know how I can use the hard disk it has. Do I have to run certain programs before it starts? Some kind of boot disk? (Now it doesn't do anything...)"

My old friend Sheldon Winick tells Kasper:

"The TT030's standard graphic modes can run all of its resolutions, except for TT-High, on a regular SVGA monitor. These resolutions include ST-Low, ST-Medium, ST-High (640 x 400 monochrome), TT-Low, and TT-Medium.

To run TT-High, you will need one of Atari's high-res 19" monitors (TTM194 or TTM195). TT-High is obviously the best for Cubase, but you can also run it nicely in ST-High res on a standard SVGA monitor.

You should note that the "unique" proportions of the Atari display will probably require internal adjustment of most SVGA monitors to get a properly proportioned picture. Best way to adjust the display is have a program generate a graphic circle on the screen, then adjust the circle so it is perfectly round."

John Garone asks:

"Is there a program to retrieve data from damaged Jaz disks?"

Mario Becroft asks John:

"How is the disc damaged? If the filesystem is damaged (owing to physical disc damage or a software malfunction) you may still be able to retrieve the data manually if you know what you are doing. If part of the disc is physically damaged there is probably no way to retrieve the data that was stored there, but that may not stop you from retrieving data that was stored elsewhere on the disc.

There are tools such as Diamond Edge which can automatically repair simple errors but otherwise you need to do it by hand with a disc editor."

Justin, the self-proclaimed "hellraiser", asks:

"I've recently got a 520STE, basically just to have a bit of nostalgia and play some of the classic old games, such as Dungeon Master, but I have a few questions:-

- 1) Are there any major compatibility issues with the STE? I seem to remember a few, but this was quite some time ago.
- 2) Is there any way of adding a hard disk to an STE?
- 3) Or how about a CD?
- 4) I have a CD containing numerous disk images of ST games. Now, I realise I can use something like Makedisk to dump these images onto floppy, but this would be a bit slow. Is there any way I can get the ST to treat one of these images as, say, drive A? I mean, link the ST to the PC by the parallel port for example, and use a device driver for it. Does anything like this exist?
- 5) How picky is the STE about the 30 pin SIMMS it accepts? A friend has a few pulled out of an old 486, but I'd like to know if they are likely to work.
- 6) I know there are loads of sites with disk images of games, etc, on, but are there any with disk images of utils disks, with stuff like Assempro, Devpac, Fast Basic, that sort of thing? I can get hold of the originals of most of these, but having been left in a cold, damp loft for the best part of 7 years, most of them no longer work.
- 7) And finally, what is the maximum baud rate you can drive the ST's serial port at?

Sorry if this goes on a bit, but I thought I'd get all the questions out in one go!"

Robert Schaffner answers Justin's queries:

- "1)Some games are directly made for STe machines, but other ones should also work fine.
- 2) DMA (Megafile) DMA to SCSI Adaptor (LINK Adaptors) Internal IDE Interface
- 3)Same way. External, DMA to SCSI Adaptor..
- 4) I've never heard about that and how it works.
- 5) Best way the simm had the same technical data as the simm what the machine contain. Watch atari memory bank groups. I can remember that the STE2 must be upgraded bank wise..
- 6) You are sure these sites are free, or they all piracy sites? Maybe damaged disks can't be re-animated. Needs a long time to pick up working parts from any disk and you can't got all data. I'm not sure anybody put these utilities to the web. Mostly these sides contain games..
- 7) 19K2 without HSModem, without Hardware modification. Save an old 520ST here, this machine contains "RS-Speed" so I have a maximum serial baud rate

of 115K2. But MagiC runs, as example, it's better to go down with the baud rate. (CRC-Errors with MagiC) With single tos and coNnect 2.46, fine to use."

Mike Freeman posts this idea:

"Consider this:

If you take the Web Browsers available for TOS machines (CAB, Adamas, Wensuite, Newsie, and Lynx), combined you pretty much have the browser that we've been wanting for a long time. But apart, they all fall short in one area or another.

If we could get Alexander Clauss to release CAB's source code (since he obviously isn't interested in supporting us any longer), and get the authors of most, if not all the others to work together on one large project, I think we would have something great on our hands!

Here's my idea of a great browser:

1. Take the HTML support, GUI, fonts handling, and other important features from CAB that are lacking in the other browsers.
2. Add them to the JavaScript support and graphics display from Adamas.
3. Add that to the overall speed of Wensuite (if that's possible).
4. Add that to the FTP, News, and Mail support incorporated in Newsie, Adamas, or Wensuite.

Just think, instead of a bunch of people working on different browsers that are more or less incomplete, why not work together to bring what they have into one complete browser? I think it is very selfish and overly competitive for this market when we have everyone isolating themselves creating software that really doesn't do what's needed instead of bringing individual talents together and making one heck of a great piece of software! I'd personally rather see one great browser instead of bunch of mediocre ones. Just an idea... Any other thoughts?"

Joshua Kaijankowski asks Mike:

"Why not make an Atari version of Netscape since the source code is available?"

Good question Joshua... why not?

Katherine Ellis tells Joshua (and me):

"1) PARTS of netscape only are available in src code (mozilla it would be, the free one which is not netscape navigator src (as far as I know))

2) netscape src are written X11 in mind. (you have X11 on your atari?)

) Netscape wouldn't work well at all in 4meg of ram and a 8mhz cpu. Netscape on linux with 48meg of ram installed just crawls with constant swapping on the p133.

4) One OS would have to be chosen, unless there should be 3 ports of netscape? one for single TOS, one for mint and one for magic?

5) What stack will be made for? MiNTnet would be the closest thing I could think of, but I am sure then magic people with iconnect would be mad? what about stik? or wensuite internet API? "

Anyway, talking about netscape is not a realistic way to handle the web browser problems we might have."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News      -   The Latest Gaming News!
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bleem! PlayStation Emulator to Release Free v.1.5

Increased Support For Over 70 Additional Games, Better Speed Management, and More

PC gamers can now enjoy a new and improved version of bleem!, the eye-popping software that lets you play hundreds of PlayStation games on your PC. Version 1.5, released last Friday via a free download from www.bleem.com , delivers improved compatibility for over 70 games, dozens of bug fixes, improved texture rendering in Direct 3D, new controller profiles for easy, automatic configuration, and greatly- improved speed management for more consistent gameplay in Microsoft Windows.

bleem! v.1.5 improves memory card support for popular games like WWF: Attitude, Final Fantasy 8, Castlevania and Star Ocean: The Second Story, adding over 40 titles to the 250+ games that were already fully-compatible in previous editions of the software. In addition, bleem! will now work with another 30 PlayStation games for the first time, including Dino Crisis, Knockout Kings, Contra, Final DOOM, and G-Police. Because bleem!'s code is so highly optimized, more powerful PCs actually played some games TOO FAST so the ``heart" of bleem!'s emulation code has been entirely

re-written for more consistent and accurate game speed overall, resulting in better sound synchronization and gameplay that more closely matches the PlayStation console.

The new version also offers a "texel alignment" option to eliminate faint lines that can appear between textures when playing games in 3D hardware mode; emulation support for NegCon and JogCon controllers, and added automatic configuration profiles for game controllers including Microsoft Force Feedback Joystick and Gravis GamePad Pro USB; an installer/uninstaller program for easier download and installation; and various other performance tweaks.

The new upgrade can be downloaded free at www.bleem.com .

3Com Scores With Modem Geared Toward Serious Gamers

A Selection of Exciting Activision Titles, Up to
43 Percent Faster Performance than Competition
Make Gaming Modem Ideal Holiday Stocking Stuffer

Geared at serious online gamers looking for some extra kick in their connections, the new Internet Gaming modem from 3Com Corporation offers users a level of performance that goes above and beyond the traditional analog modem.

Optimized for faster ping times, more stable connections and reduced lag times, the 3Comfi U.S. Robotics Internet Gaming modem gives users a smoother, more powerful game experience than analog modems currently on the market. Built around 3Com's award-winning 56K (1) V.90 analog modem, the internal PCI-controller-based Internet Gaming modem makes the entire game experience more realistic. The chance of being disconnected during a key play or experiencing a frustrating pause in a key action sequence has been greatly reduced since 3Com has optimized the firmware to provide a better level of connection stability.

Ping times are significantly faster with the Internet Gaming modem, allowing players to get their games started quicker than ever before. In fact, Henderson Communications Laboratories, an independent testing lab, concluded that the 3Com Internet Gaming modem achieved up to 43 percent faster weighted average ping times than five other competitor modems tested this October when calling to 3Com Total Control or Ascend Max server equipment.

Best of all, the Internet Gaming modem comes complete with two of the hottest game titles available today: the mechanized combat game Heavy Gear II and the intense strategy game Civilization: Call to Power. Internet Gaming modem purchasers will also receive a coupon that gives them the option of choosing one additional game, free of charge, from a selection of titles that includes Asteroids, Jack Nicklaus 6, Heretic II and Soldier of Fortune (special edition). The coupon also offers users the chance to purchase the full version of Quake III Arena for \$24.95, a \$25 savings over the estimated street price.

"People who are serious about their online gaming need a modem geared exactly for that purpose," said John Yoon, director of product management, 3Com Personal Communication Division. "The 3Com Internet Gaming modem gives true gamers an edge that other modems just can't match. And, when you

combine its great performance and selection of gaming software, the Internet Gaming modem also becomes the ideal holiday gift."

Purchasers of 3Com's Internet Gaming modem also will receive an Internet Gaming modem CD. This CD contains the 3Com Gaming modem configuration tool, which allows users to either enable or disable the modem's gaming mode. The CD also includes GameSpy, the most popular gaming utility for finding Internet gaming servers, MP3Spy, modem drivers and the online version of the manual.

As with all 3Com U.S. Robotics V.90 56K modems, the Internet Gaming modem includes x2 technology to ensure backward compatibility with x2-capable modems and server equipment. This way, users are always sure of getting a connection, regardless of the technology with which they are communicating. The Internet Gaming modem also takes advantage of 3Com's exclusive line probing technology. This feature allows 3Com modems to dynamically create a signal pattern that optimizes throughput for that particular line, ultimately leading to higher levels of performance than other V.90 designs. Furthermore, the 3Com U.S. Robotics Internet Gaming modem comes with a 5-year hardware limited warranty.

Scheduled to be available late October, the 3Com Internet Gaming modem will be available for an estimated street price of \$119.95.

Microsoft May Introduce Video Game Console

Microsoft Corp. is considering pouring billions of dollars over four years into developing and promoting a home video game console, in a move to control digital entertainment, the Wall Street Journal said.

The console is code-named X-box, a person briefed on Microsoft's plans told the Journal, and would represent an attempt to head off Sony Corp. in the home video-game market.

The Microsoft game system is expected to go on sale in the fall of 2000, unnamed industry executives told the Journal. Sony's Playstation 2 is expected to be launched in March in Japan and in the United States in fall 2000. It's not clear when Microsoft could announce its system, the Journal said.

The new Sony machine will be able to run high-quality three-dimensional animation, play digital video disks, connect to the Internet and store data in hard disk drives, the Journal said, potentially representing competition for home personal computers, which use Microsoft software, the paper said.

Atari's Pong Brings the Fun Home Again

Pong, Q*bert and Missile Command are Back in a Big, New 3D Way!

The 1974 holiday season was a high-scoring time in history as Atari's arcade hit Pong came home and ignited the home interactive entertainment industry. Just in time for the 1999 holiday season, Atari's doing it again with a new 3D Pong for the PC and Sony PlayStation.

In new Pong, players go head-to-head, table-tennis-style, lobbing the ball back and forth in pursuit of high score. Sharp reflexes are key, because this time Pong packs the playing field with mischievous penguins, jagged terrain and many more challenges over 20 new levels. Pong is available in stores now at a suggested retail price of \$19.95 (PC) and \$29.95 (PSX).

Hasbro Interactive's first game for the Atari line, Frogger, hopped straight to the top of the charts selling more than 2.5 million copies on PC and Sony Playstation since its debut. This summer, Centipede slithered onto the scene wowing action- and arcade-lovers alike with classic gameplay and added '90s features. In response to the success of these front-running titles, Hasbro Interactive will release a sequel to Frogger in 2000.

Other blasts from the past dressed up for the future include cool new versions of classics Missile Command and Q*bert for the PC and Sony PlayStation. In Q*bert, the premise of this puzzle game may be familiar but the playing fields are a whole new frontier. Players navigate cube mazes, turning all squares the same color before Q*bert's zany enemies - Ugg, Wrong-Way and Coily the Snake - foil the plans. Only this time, Q*bert's truly a hip hopper on a mission to blast through fantastic space worlds to save his home! *%&^%!! Q*bert will bounce onto retail store shelves in November at suggested retail price of \$29.95 (PC and PSX).

1980s ``must-have" Missile Command has come full-circle, literally, as players must protect six cities from incoming missile attacks - blasting them from every angle! This ultimate twist on the classic Atari space-war game is sure to delight a new generation of players. The new Missile Command will fly onto retail store shelves in November at a suggested retail price of \$29.95 (PC) and \$39.95 (PSX).

Also joining the Atari lineup this fall will be the first Atari title for the Sega Dreamcast, Centipede. Exploiting the power of this new gaming console to the fullest, Centipede for the Sega Dreamcast will feature superior graphics and special effects as well as incorporating new adventure elements.

Hasbro Interactive is also introducing new game concepts that capture the essence of Atari's fast action-play. There's the character-driven puzzle game Glover for Sony PlayStation and futuristic sports action game Nerf ArenaBlast PC.

For more information on Hasbro Interactive's Atari games, visit www.atari.com.

All-New Cool Boarders 4 Goes Big This Year With
New Moves, Riders, Courses and Boards

The Best-Selling Snowboarding Videogame Series On
The PlayStation Game Console Returns With All-New
Features and Gameplay

989 Studios, makers of the best-selling Cool Boarders snowboarding videogame series, announced today that Cool Boarders 4 will be available for the PlayStation game console Tuesday. With the involvement of 16 world-famous pro snowboarders, nine major snowboard manufacturers, countless realistic maneuvers and fast arcade-style gameplay, Cool

Boarders 4 is setting the standard for real snowboarding action in a videogame.

In Cool Boarders 4, gamers can ride like the pros with the inclusion of more professional riders than any other snowboarding videogame on the market. Gamers can emulate the moves of 16 snowboarding professionals, including Jim Rippey, Ross Powers and 13-year-old phenomenon Shaun White from Burtonfi, as well as J.P. Walker from Forumfi and Michele Taggart from Salomon.

"Each year, the Cool Boarders development team dramatically improves upon the previous installment. This year, they'll deliver the most intense and fun-playing arcade-style snowboarding videogame ever," said Jeffrey Fox, vice president, marketing, 989 Studios. "By involving numerous world-class riders in this year's game, Cool Boarders 4 will be the best-playing snowboarding videogame to hit the PlayStation. Game players, snowboarders and snowboarding enthusiasts are sure to be impressed with Cool Boarders 4's incredibly realistic graphics, fast gameplay and all-new moves and features."

With a newly-advanced 3D game engine, Cool Boarders 4 adds many new features, which let the player experience the true feeling of snowboarding. The new "Trickmaster Mode" gives riders the opportunity to learn and perfect their own tricks on long downhill courses filled with jump after jump. "Multiplayer Tournament Mode" lets gamers challenge their friends on any event to see who can nail the best tricks and make it downhill first.

Riders can choose from nine authentic snowboard manufacturers, featuring more than 30 boards from Burton, K2, MLY, M3, Morrow, Ride, Salomon, Forum and Santa Cruz. Each board is based on its actual performance ratings. Players can also create custom snowboards as well as customize riders and change their body style and clothing.

In addition to the Downhill, Half Pipe, Slope Style, CBX and Big Air events, Cool Boarders 4 offers new "Special Events" on each mountain for the ultimate snowboarding challenge. Riders can bust into fresh powder of varying depths and maneuver through tight courses, knock down snowmen on a challenging downhill or outrun an avalanche.

Cool Boarders 4 features Burton pro rider Jim Rippey on the package.

Cool Boarders 4 Key Features:

- One player, two-player or four-player mode
- State-of-the-art enhanced 3D game engine featuring polygonal characters, unprecedented courses and real-time rendering providing the most realistic and entertaining snowboarding experience
- Hundreds of snowboarding tricks including hand plants, Stalefish Tweaks and Method-Melons
- Sixteen professional snowboarders, including: Jim Rippey/Burton, Shaun White/Burton, Ross Powers/Burton, Chris Engelsman/K2, Michele Taggart/Salomon, Chad Otterstrom/M3, Andrew Crawford/Morrow, Noah Salasnek/MLY, Jimmy Halopoff/MLY, Brian Savard/K2, Jason Brown/Burton, Jennie Waara/Ride, Tricia Byrnes/K2, Darren Cingel/Santa Cruz, Natasza Zurek/Burton and J.P.Walker/Forum
- Dozens of authentic snowboards from nine major snowboard manufacturers: Burton, K2, Salomon, MLY, Forum, Ride, Morrow,

Santa Cruz and M3

- Create custom riders by changing body style and clothing
- Create and customize snowboards by tweaking pattern, color and performance
- In addition to Downhill, Half Pipe, Slope Style, CBX and Big Air events, each mountain includes its own "Special Event" to reward only the most skilled boarders
- New "Trickmaster Mode" teaches players to perfect tricks and ride like the pros
- All-new replay mode lets gamers slow down, speed up or stop the replay camera while reviewing the last run
- Five challenging mountains
- New "Multiplayer Tournament Mode" lets the player challenge his/her friends to see who can nail the best tricks and get down the hill first
- Authentic in-game partners include Mountain Dew and Slim Jim
- Designed and developed by Idol Minds, LLC

Midway Goes Retro with New Arcade Party Pak

Coin-Op Classics Collection for PlayStation Game Console
and PC Value Priced to Enhance Consumer Appeal

Midway Home Entertainment announced Wednesday the availability of six its all-time favorite coin-op games in its new Arcade Party Pak collection which includes Rampage, Smash TV and KLAX. Arcade Party Pak shipped this week for the PlayStation game console and PC and is value-priced for each platform.

''Midway has one of the most extensive collections of classic games in the industry and now parents and their children can enjoy more of these classics on their favorite home system," said Paula Cook, director of marketing for Midway Home Entertainment. ''Releasing Arcade Party Pak at a value price point makes it a very attractive option for consumers this holiday season."

Arcade Party Pak joins NFL Blitz and Mortal Kombat 4 among others in Midway's value priced line of games which targets the under \$30.00 software PC and console markets.

''Never before have gaming platforms been so accessible from a pricing standpoint, and as we've seen, many more consumers have embraced the platforms for this reason," said Paula Cook. ''The next step in the industry is to make sure that games are equally as accessible for these consumers. As a leader in the gaming industry, Midway is meeting this need by providing a spectrum of quality games in all price categories."

Arcade Party Pak includes:

Rampage - Become a scientist who morphs into one of three giant monsters after a freak experiment goes awry. The monsters' sole purpose is to destroy the city and at the same time survive against the inhabitants who occupy the terrorized city.

Smash TV - Be a contestant on a futuristic game show attempting to collect prizes while fighting off a multitude of enemies.

If players survive, they will be awarded a visit to the Pleasure Dome. Smash TV was the first game developed for Midway by Mark Trumell who went on to become the lead programmer and designer of NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC, NBA Jam and NFL Blitz.

Super Sprint - Play as one of three racers who must cross the finish line first while picking up bonuses. Win all of the races to become the Super Sprint Champion.

Toobin' - Tube down rivers while fighting enemies before they damage the tube. At each river's end is a whirl-pool taking players to another wet and wild ride.

KLAX - Catch colored blocks rolling down a conveyer belt and stack them vertically by color. Defeat all of the levels to become the master KLAX.

Exclusive to the PlayStation version:

720(Degrees) - Skateboard through a ramp-filled park performing stunts and tricks for points. Players must run to the nearest tournament without getting caught by the killer bees.

Exclusive to the PC version:

Rampart - Build a castle with puzzle-like pieces for an upcoming territory war. After building a castle, gamers combat rival castles or an advancing fleet imposing on their land.

In addition to Arcade Party Pak's action, strategy, racing, and puzzle solving games, the collection will include "making of" video footage with interviews from the games' original programmers and artists. All games in the Arcade Party Pak allow players to save their high scores using a PlayStation or PC memory card.

Grandia Brings Masterpiece Role-Playing Game Experience to PlayStation Game Console

Sony Computer Entertainment America announced Tuesday the launch of Grandia, one of the most popular role-playing games (RPGs) in recent history, now available exclusively for the PlayStation game console.

Developed by Game Arts, the producers of the Alisa Dragoon and Lunar series, Grandia features a strong character-driven story, combined with imaginative, vibrant and detailed gameplay. With scenarios that will captivate players for more than 70 hours, Grandia creates a challenging and ultimately satisfying PlayStation gaming experience.

"Grandia is a creative and innovative title with an engaging storyline that will appeal to both RPG enthusiasts and adventure gamers alike," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "Grandia's heritage as a classic RPG masterpiece makes it one of the most popular role-playing games in recent history, and it represents a strong addition to our already extensive PlayStation RPG library."

Grandia is an extraordinary story that pits magic and technology against

the feral guise of corruption. Long ago, before humans could claim their superiority upon this world, a benevolent race with great knowledge and powers lived in peace and harmony in the magical city of Angelou. As the world evolved, humans began to establish their roots in these lands and people began to believe that the existence of Angelou was nothing but a myth. But the sinister General Baal knows otherwise and scours the world in hopes to find the ancient city and unleash its secrets.

Players embark on an unforgettable journey as they assume the role of Justin, a precocious 15-year-old boy, as he and his friends, Sue and Feena, set out to stop the evil General and his diabolical plans. Justin's adventure begins as he uncovers what happened to the ancient world and tries to stop General Baal from awakening the deadly secret.

''Grandia was designed to challenge players with real-time battles that require strategically planned attacks using distance, spells, placement and order," said Blaire. ''The game truly evokes a sense of accomplishment, delivering gratifying gameplay to RPG enthusiasts."

Key features include:

- * Up to four characters to occupy the player's party in exploration and battle
- * Inviting and vibrant worlds, each with their own architectural style
- * A Field Radar view, providing an overhead perspective for easier exploration and item location

-- More than 200 enemies to battle

- * Real-time battles where players are challenged with strategically planning out attacks, distance, spells, placement and order; all four characters can also attack simultaneously
- * An impressive and captivating system of magic and character development

-- More than 200 weapons and more than 200 items to collect

-- More than 80 spells and attack techniques

- * Item collection to purchase magic, spells, weapons and other items - players can customize purchases to fit their character's personality for unique combination attacks
- * Magnificent cinematic sequences and voice-over interaction with non-playable characters that add another dimension of story development

The X-Files Now Available For PlayStation

Fox Interactive announced Wednesday that it has shipped The X-Files for the PlayStation game console to retail stores nationwide. The X-Files, which features four CDs packed with original footage starring Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny, is available at an estimated street price of \$44.98.

As The X-Files celebrates its seventh captivating season, Fox Interactive gives fans of Fox's spine tingling series a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the crime solving action. Players assume the role of field agent Craig Wilmore, assisting Agents Scully and Mulder in their dangerous

investigation. Gamers will work along side Mulder and Scully to uncover various cryptic clues, examine real crime scenes, conduct interviews and make key decisions that control the final outcome of the story. Each decision that players make will alter Mulder, Scully and Wilmore's investigative paths and will serve as the backbone for the story's progression. Players will have to use keen resourcefulness and intelligence to crack this X-Files mystery.

The X-Files was developed by Seattle-based HyperBole Studios.

Electronic Arts Ships FIFA 2000

Electronic Arts Tuesday announced it shipped FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer, the latest version of EA SPORTS' No. 1 worldwide franchise for the PC and the PlayStation game console.

With lifetime-to-date sales exceeding 16 million units, the Electronic Arts (EA) FIFA Soccer interactive titles are the world's best-selling sports games. FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer is the first title shipped in North America by EA featuring all 12 Major League Soccer (MLS) teams, more than 200 MLS players and in-game commentary by Julie Foudy, member of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team and ESPN broadcast commentator.

To add realism to the game, two-time MLS Defender of the Year and three-time MLS All-Star team member Eddie Pope, from DC United, participated in a motion capture session earlier this year. Motion capture, a technique used in high end special effects, has been perfected by EA, and adds to authenticity by accurately reproducing an athlete's moves in a game. By motion capturing several of Pope's soccer moves such as leaping headers and diving slide tackles, his exact moves are simulated in the game. In addition to Pope, star defender Sol Campbell, who plays for the English National Team was also motion captured. Pope, who is featured on the North American package, and Campbell, who is featured on the UK package, are both highlighted in EA SPORTS marketing and advertising campaigns in their respective countries.

"A lot of MLS players, including myself, have been fans of the FIFA Soccer series since the first games came out years ago," said Eddie Pope. "After MLS games and especially on road trips, we often compete playing FIFA Soccer. This year it is especially fun to compete against my teammates and my friends while seeing myself in the game."

FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer features:

- * More than 75,000 words of commentary by Julie Foudy and Phil Schoen (ESPN).
- * More than 40 classic teams that allow game players to pit their favorite legendary teams against one another or challenge a historical team against a modern team.
- * Game animations that capture the rough and tumble aspects of soccer with increased physical contact, giant collisions and gnarly falls.
- * Instant response to player commands for fakes, dekes, bicycle kicks, volleys, headers, chest traps, scissors kicks as well as pinpoint passing, shots and dribbling.
- * An original musical track by UK pop sensation Robbie Williams, as well as tunes from bands Apollo Four Forty, Elite Force, Gay Dad, Junior Blanks, Lunatic Calm, Reel Big Fish and Sniper.

FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer (called FIFA 2000 outside of North America) showcases the most extensive collection of celebrity commentators found in any sports game. Depending on the territory in which the game is purchased, the game contains localized speech and text for the following nine languages/dialects: UK English, US English, German, Spanish, French, Italian, Hebrew, Greek and Brazilian Portuguese (PC only). A Japanese version is planned for shipment in 2000. The game is also localized to support Swedish and Dutch text.

''Having been involved with EA's FIFA Soccer series since its inception in 1993, I am incredibly proud to be involved with a development team that has raised the bar for interactive gaming year after year," said Marc Aubanel, the game's executive producer at Electronic Arts. ''It was a pleasure and a privilege to work with stars Sol Campbell, Julie Foudy, Eddie Pope and Robbie Williams who graciously lent their talent and expertise to make FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer the definitive interactive sports entertainment experience for the new millennium."

The PC version of FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer is optimized for use with the 3Dfx Voodoo 2(tm) 3D-accelerator card, and it supports other major Direct3D(tm) accelerator cards. These cards graphically enhance the playing experience by adding richly textured players and stadiums, as well as real-time lighting, scoreboards and shadowing effects.

FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer for the PlayStation game console supports Analog Control delivering force feedback. A Game Boy Color version is scheduled to ship later this fall. The suggested retail price for FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer PC and the PlayStation game console is (U.S.) \$39.95. Consumers may purchase the game directly at the EA Store(SM) (<http://eastore.ea.com>) or by calling EA Direct Sales at 800/245-4525.

The game carries an ESRB rating of ''E" (Everyone).

Electronic Arts Ships CyberTiger Golf Video Game

Arcade Style Golf Game Tees Off with Tiger Woods and Leaves Reality Behind

Electronic Arts Thursday announced it shipped CyberTiger, the newest game from the Electronic Arts/PGA TOUR line of golf products. Focusing on golf's lighter side, CyberTiger for the PlayStation game console is a fast-paced, arcade-style video game that leaves the traditional rules of golf behind. Taking lessons from PGA TOUR star Tiger Woods, Electronic Arts developed CyberTiger to appeal to young, action-oriented game players with its cartoon graphics, fantasy golf courses and easy-to-use controls.

''When I play in a PGA TOUR tournament, golf is fairly serious, so I like that CyberTiger focuses on fun," said Tiger Woods. ''CyberTiger is the perfect game for me to show my buddies just who has the best gaming skills. It's fun earning special power-ups like a super ball to hit 450-yard drives or a ghost ball to hit through a tree branch. Sometimes I wish I had these power-up golf balls in my real golf bag!"

Cyber golfers can play four fantasy golf courses modeled after real PGA TOUR venues, as well as Spyglass Hill Golf Course in Pebble Beach, California. Throughout the game, players can unlock hidden characters,

special skills, trick shots and super-charged golf clubs. Consumers with a Dual Shock analog gamepad can crush the ball in real-time using the joystick. Real-time shot shaping adds a whole new dimension to golf by allowing golfers to add extra sidespin and backspin to their shots.

''Anytime you work with someone like Tiger Woods, who knows a tremendous amount about golf and video games, great things are bound to happen," said Richard Hilleman, vice president and executive producer at Electronic Arts. ''Tiger clearly understands what makes games fun to play. CyberTiger has a huge amount of gaming variety. You can challenge a buddy at the shooting gallery, grow your golfing character from a child, to a teen, to an adult or choose to play a more traditional stroke play tournament. We have stayed true to our design vision of creating a golf game that takes a playful step beyond reality and delivers surprises at every turn."

CyberTiger for the PlayStation supports the Dual Shock controller that gives force feedback on all the big shots. The game is available for US \$39.95. CyberTiger carries an ESRB rating of ''E"(Every one). A Nintendo 64 version of CyberTiger will be available in the winter of 2000.

THQ Ships 'Madden NFL 2000' for the Game Boy Color

THQ Inc. Wednesday announced the release of ''Madden NFL 2000" for Game Boy Color.

''Madden NFL 2000" is the first EA SPORTS release to ship under THQ's agreement with Electronic Arts (EA) to develop and distribute seven EA SPORTS games. Those titles include ''NHL 2000," ''NBA Live 2000," ''Madden NFL 2000," ''NASCAR 2000," ''Triple Play 2001," ''Tiger Woods PGA TOUR 2000" and ''FIFA 2000."

Published by Electronic Arts, ''Madden NFL 2000" is available at major retailers nationwide at the suggested retail price of \$29.99.

''As the top third-party Nintendo Game Boy publisher, we feel very confident in the release of 'Madden NFL 2000' for the hugely popular Game Boy Color system," said Michael Rubinelli, vice president of product development, THQ.

''The game offers the juke moves, monster hits, sideline grabs and amazing 'Madden-style' plays that fans of the franchise have come to expect from their favorite NFL players -- all in full-color in the palm of your hand," Rubinelli added.

THQ will also be shipping other EA SPORTS Game Boy Color titles in time for the holidays, including ''Tiger Woods PGA TOUR 2000," ''FIFA 2000" and ''NHL 2000." Officially endorsed by John Madden and licensed by the NFL, ''Madden NFL 2000" gives fans of both the NFL and the hand-held Game Boy Color all the heart-pounding excitement the football season has to offer.

The game features over 150 offensive and defensive plays to choose from in 14 different formations. Up-to-date rosters and complete statistics for all the teams and players will carry enthusiasts through five play modes including Season, Playoffs, Exhibition, Sudden Death and Quick Start.

Enthusiasts will even be able to substitute any player into offensive and defensive formations and witness the game's unique audible mode in calling

plays ``on the fly." When the fun needs to be placed on hold, hand-held fans will be able to save their progress using the password system.

THQ And Nickelodeon Ship 'Rugrats: Time Travelers' for Game Boy Color

THQ Inc. and Nickelodeon announced the second installment of ``Rugrats" games for the Game Boy Color, ``Rugrats: Time Travelers," shipped Wednesday.

Based on ``Rugrats," the No. 1 rated kids program on TV, ``Rugrats: Time Travelers" is available at major retailers nationwide for a suggested retail price of \$29.95.

``'Rugrats' franchise games have won both critical and commercial success across PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color systems," said Peter Dille, vice president of marketing, THQ. ``The continued success of the 'Rugrats' property coupled with the strong demand for kid-friendly games on every platform, positions THQ very well for the release of 'Rugrats: Time Travelers'."

``We've experienced tremendous success working with THQ on 'Rugrats' video games," says Steve Youngwood, director, software, publishing and new businesses, Nickelodeon Consumer Products. ``With direct input from the show creators, 'Rugrats: Time Travelers' offers a truly authentic interactive 'Rugrats' experience on Game Boy Color."

In ``Rugrats(TM): Time Travelers," the familiar ``Rugrats" babies find themselves in a toy store with an out-of-this world time machine. ``Rugrats" fans can play as Tommy, Chuckie, Phil, Lil, Angelica and Baby Dil as they explore over 10 levels of gameplay in time periods ranging from the Prehistoric era to the Wild West.

``Rugrats: Time Travelers," inspired by the ``Rugrats" television show, features an original story and gameplay variations, including traditional platform, puzzle, chase, and racing. The game also boasts a number of hidden bonus levels and will allow players to save their progress through a password system. ``Rugrats: Time Travelers" is featured on a dual mode cartridge that is compatible with both Game Boy Color and Game Boy systems.

Sega Dreamcast Continues To Expand Internet Gameplay Possibilities With Sonic Adventure Leading the Way

When Sega Dreamcast launched on 9-9-99, it heralded the first videogame console ever with its own network, thanks to a built-in 56K modem. In order to take advantage of this distinct edge on the competition, Sega of America is continuing to expand the gaming experience by introducing a new wave of downloadable gameplay elements and online activities that will be accessible only through ``Sonic Adventure" and Sega Dreamcast Network. These events and activities include Sonic World Rankings contests, the Sonic 2K competition (co-sponsored by AT&T and the Official Dreamcast Magazine) and special downloadable levels for the holidays. Sonic competitions are not PC-compatible, so only gamers with a Sega Dreamcast can take part in these events.

Currently, Sega is the first and only videogame company utilizing the Internet to expand and enhance the console gaming experience, recently naming AT&T WorldNet Service as its preferred Internet Service Provider. This pioneering effort is beginning with level augmentations and other surprises that can be downloaded and integrated into existing game titles such as ''Sonic Adventure." Additional Internet gameplay elements, point-to-point play and true online gaming will be phased in next year.

''Sega's plan is to continue to phase in online gameplay elements, giving consumers new experiences never seen before on a console," says Charles Bellfield, director of marketing communications, Sega of America, ''Sonic Adventure' is the first of many games that will be given additional 'arms and legs' through the Internet."

New gameplay elements and online activities include:

Sonic World Rankings

Finally, gamers can find out how they stack up against others worldwide in ''Sonic Adventure." The Sonic World Rankings contests require each participant to complete an action stage taken from ''Sonic Adventure" and upload their scores to the ''Sonic Adventure" Homepage. Each event will be different, but all will use a pre-determined action stage taken from the game and a specific Sonic character. Among the contests are: The Time Attack, in which the quickest time wins; The Score Attack, which is judged by points accumulated; The Fish Weight, challenging gamers to catch the heaviest fish; and Twinkle Circuits, you're cart-racing against the clock. The performance times of all of these events will be collected and ranked throughout the world. Before the gamers upload their saved file, they can also submit comments, brag about their score, etc. The World Ranking events will be run every two weeks for a period of at least one year with all of the times being tracked by Sega and ranked on the site. This contest goes live for gamers on October 15, 1999.

Sonic 2K Contest Sponsored by AT&T and the Official Dreamcast Magazine

AT&T and the Official Dreamcast Magazine are collaborating with Sega to promote a contest involving unique level adaptations from ''Sonic Adventure." Participants will be able to download special levels of ''Sonic Adventure" and compete with other gamers for prizes. These special levels -- which are only accessible through Sega Dreamcast and the Sonic Adventure Homepage -- contain visually revamped courses with new objectives and challenges. When contestants download and play the special levels, they will automatically have their name and time posted to the Sonic Adventure Homepage ranked in order of fastest times. Prizes include a year of free Internet Access from AT&T WorldNet Service, subscriptions to the Official Dreamcast Magazine and plenty of Sega Dreamcast merchandise, from T-shirts to games. This contest is part of a series of 3 three-week competitions scheduled from October 15 through January 14, 2000.

Special Holiday Downloads

As a special holiday treat, additional ''Sonic Adventure" downloads will be available at Halloween and Christmas. Players will be able to access these gameplay variations with their Sega Dreamcast by downloading them with a copy of ''Sonic Adventure" and saving the unique levels to their VMU (Visual Memory Unit). The Halloween download is currently available, which features some spooky touches to Tremble Park (formerly know as Twinkle Park), including such things as jack-o'-lanterns and new banners.

At launch, ``Sonic Adventure" was introduced with a slew of online capabilities. Through the Dreamcast Network, gamers can download special add-ons, post messages to bulletin boards, share tips and tricks with other Sonic players across the globe, upload high scores and see rankings. ``Sonic Adventure" also features gameplay through the Chao component; an in-game virtual pet that can be showcased and traded through the Dreamcast Network. Upcoming Chao features include the Chao Black Market, where you can purchase rare and exotic Chao; the Chao Race Rankings, which lets you pit your Chao's race times against other Chao from around the world; and the Chao Breeder's Guide, which teaches you how to create exotic Chao and other breeding techniques.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online      -          Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Songbird \$99 in '99 Special!

If you've been on the fence, now is the time to pick up these great games at the best prices ever. But hurry! This offer is only good for the first 20 orders and your order must be postmarked by Nov. 5th to qualify.

Please email songbird@atari.org to confirm availability. This special offer is subject to change or termination without prior notice.

Remember Atari fans, your pre-orders for the upcoming Jaguar games from Songbird must be called in or postmarked by Nov. 1st. There are some great games coming for the Jaguar, and pre-ordering is the only way to guarantee your personal copy of each game.

Carl Forhan

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

New Apple Operating System Sales Start

Apple Computer Inc. said [last] Friday the latest operating system for its Macintosh family of computers, beefed up with special Internet features, hit store shelves last weekend.

The new Mac OS 9 operating system will carry a suggested retail price tag of \$99 and will include Sherlock 2, Apple's Internet search and shopping tool that lets users find and compare products online, the company said.

'Mac OS 9 is the best Internet OS ever," Apple's interim Chief Executive Officer Steve Jobs said in a statement. ''With great new features like Sherlock 2, we think our customers are going to love Mac OS 9." Retailers including CompUSA Inc. and Sears, Roebuck and Co. held ''midnight madness" events to promote the new operating system, which will also be available online at Apple's Web site, <http://www.apple.com>, the company said.

Users of earlier Mac OS 8.5 or 8.6 operating systems will qualify for a \$20 rebate on purchases of the new system, Apple said.

Lawsuit Flares Up In Wake of Mac OS 9 Debut

Just days after its release, Apple's Mac OS 9 operating system is drawing controversy.

Apple's latest operating system hit stores last weekend, with some retailers holding "Midnight Madness" sales. Priced at \$99, the new software includes enhanced search technology, new security and password features, and other improvements.

Today, an existing trademark infringement lawsuit filed against the company was updated to include the new operating system. New York-based Imattec is claiming that the ColorSync 3.0 technology in Mac OS 9 infringes on patents held by the digital imaging firm.

Apple declined to comment on the specifics of the suit. "We don't comment on pending litigation," a company spokesperson said. "But we believe the claims are without merit."

Imattec filed a \$1.1 billion lawsuit against Apple in February 1998, alleging that the Mac operating system infringed upon patents first filed

by Imatec's president, Hanoch Shalit. Both companies have finished the discovery phase of the case, and the trial is expected to start in the next few months.

At issue in the original suit is Imatec's proprietary color management system, which it licenses to PC companies. Apple's new ColorSync technology continues to infringe on the patent, an Imatec spokesperson said, and also infringes upon Imatec's technology which matches the color on two monitors.

"In general terms, the patents cover how to match the color that you see on your computer monitor to the printed version," the spokesperson said. "[Apple's] ColorSync is using the exact same techniques as described in three separate patents [from Imatec]," the spokesperson said.

Patent infringement claims are growing increasingly common in the technology industry. Last week, Amazon filed suit against rival bookseller Barnesandnoble.com, alleging that the company stole its "one-click" sales technology.

Among computer makers, these suits are also flying, encompassing a variety of hardware and software issues. Two notable examples: Apple has gone after companies it claims illegally copied the iMac design, while HP, Xerox, and others are tangling in the courts over various aspects of printing technology.

In recent weeks, Apple's momentum has been slowed somewhat by legal problems and customer service woes. The company, which has staged a stunning financial turnaround driven by the popularity of the iMac computer, last month was sued by Microware, who alleged that Apple violated its "OS 9" trademark by naming its new operating system "OS 9."

More upsetting to Apple customers was the company's decision to cancel some early orders of its G4 computers in the face of processor supply problems and effectively raise prices on some orders. After numerous complaints, Apple reversed its decision, although customers loudly decried what they called shoddy customer service.

The inclusion of the Mac OS 9 ColorSync technology in the suit may have implications on the amount of damages Imatec is entitled to, the company spokesperson said. Because the new alleged infringement comes after the original suit, "We will be able to prove willful infringement that could lead to triple damages," the spokesperson said.

Intel To Launch Fastest Pentium III Monday

Intel Corp. planned to unveil its fastest-ever Pentium III chips Monday, but analysts said the launch -- a key one for the chip giant -- may be overshadowed by the lack of a much-anticipated chipset which will delay products from some PC makers.

The Santa Clara, Calif.,-based chip maker said it will unveil 15 processors for desktop computers, workstations, servers and notebook computers, including the much-anticipated chip family, code-named Coppermine, with speeds above 700 megahertz. An Intel spokesman said he could not provide any further details about the new products.

Coppermine is the name used internally at Intel for its next series of Pentium III chips for desktops and mobile computers, designed using its new 0.18 micron process technology, which creates transistors with finer linewidths.

Intel said the launch Monday will include the next Pentium III Xeon processors for the more powerful server computers and workstations, code-named Cascades.

Analysts said the launch of this family of products is important for the world's largest chip maker because the new processors, some expected to run at speeds of 700 megahertz and higher, will let Intel again say it has the fastest PC chips.

Rival Advanced Micro Devices Inc. introduced a 700 megahertz version of its Athlon chip family earlier this month, as it seeks to step up the battle with Intel in the area of more costly computers used mostly by businesses.

The launch is also key for Intel because manufacturing these next members of its Pentium III family using this new process technology will eventually lead to lower manufacturing costs for these higher profit margin chips.

In Intel's most recent third quarter, its earnings were below Wall Street's expectations, in part due to lower prices for its products and a slower-than-expected move to its new process technology.

'It's extremely important for Intel because this is what is going to allow them to deploy a lower-cost, higher-performance Pentium III and continue to fuel the high-end of the product mix," said Mark Edelstone, an analyst with Morgan Stanley Dean Witter.

Analysts said power consumption in the chips is also lower, because the transistors are smaller, so Intel will now have the first Pentium III chips for notebook computer users. Previous versions of the Pentium III run too hot for laptop users.

But analysts said the launch is not expected to include Intel's 820 chipset, code-named Camino, which was suddenly delayed last month, to the chagrin of some PC makers, like Dell Computer Corp. which had product launches tied to the processor and the chipset.

The chipset, which accompanies the new Pentium III processors, is the first use of a memory-enhancing technology developed by Rambus Inc., based in Mountain View, Calif. Certain systems were experiencing intermittent errors at extreme temperatures and voltages and the companies said two weeks ago that they were working to resolve the bugs.

'They have the problem solved and they are testing the fix," said Linley Gwennap, editorial director of the Microprocessor Report. 'They have to make sure the fix doesn't cause another problem...Everyone wants to stand up on the stage and say the chipset is ready. But they can't commit to anything unless it is 100 percent validated."

An Intel spokesman declined to comment on the chipset status, or if it will be introduced Monday.

Meanwhile, some PC makers are in limbo and unable to ship their new products, until the 820 chipset is ready. Some are looking at

alternatives, such as Intel's other chipset, the 810E, but it does not have the same graphics performance.

"PC makers are in a holding pattern," said Nathan Brookwood, an analyst with Insight 64 in Saratoga, Calif. "Either they (Intel) sort out the 820/Rambus problems, or they will have an awkward launch next week."

Rambus couldn't be reached for comment.

A spokesman for Dell Computer in Round Rock, Texas said that Dell will be introducing systems based on the new Pentium III chips, but he did not yet have any further details, such as the timing of those products.

"We are going to have a server product next year that runs Coppermine," said a spokesman for International Business Machines Corp.

At least one PC maker, Nampa, Idaho-based Micron Electronics Inc., has decided to go with a competing chipset from VIA Technologies Inc. of Taiwan.

"Micron chose the new VIA technology because it found the chipset coupled with standard 133 megahertz synchronous dynamic random access (SDRAM) memory delivers virtually the same or better performance as systems equipped with the substantially more costly RAMBUS technology," Micron said in a statement.

"This has been a pretty painful transition for them (Intel) and for the industry," said Michael Feibus, an analyst at Mercury Research. "It's very hard to work with Rambus. The bus is very fast and very alien to how everyone is used to working...Intel is feeling a lot of pain there."

Intel Launches Family Of 15 New Processors

Intel Corp. Monday unveiled 15 new Pentium processors, including a lightning-fast 733 megahertz version in a bid to reclaim its position as the maker of the world's fastest microprocessors from rival Advanced Micro Devices Inc.

Earlier this month, AMD scored an unusual coup against its Silicon Valley rival by launching a 700 megahertz version of its new Athlon chip family, unseating Intel whose fastest processor on the desktop was a 600 megahertz Pentium III.

"It is the world's fastest processor," Paul Otellini, executive vice president and general manager of Intel's architecture business group, told reporters at a news briefing. He also pointed out that the product launch was the chip giant's biggest in its 31-year history.

Intel's new chips also underscore efforts at the world's largest maker of computer microchips to produce more powerful computer processors at lower costs, which in turn should boost profit margins and fuel higher sales.

All the new products were made using a new process technology called 0.18 micron, resulting in semiconductors that have finer line widths between transistors and thus more transistors on a silicon wafer.

Intel said the new Pentium III chips have 28 million transistors compared

with about 8.5 million in the Pentium III processors made using the older 0.25 micron technology.

The new technology enables faster processing that consumes less power. Moreover, the new process was expected to lower manufacturing costs over the long term. Intel was expected to detail those benefits during its analyst meeting later this week, which will be broadcast to analysts over the Internet Thursday.

In its recent third quarter, Intel's earnings fell below Wall Street forecasts in part due to lower prices and a slower-than-expected move to the new 0.18 micron process technology.

Monday, Intel launched chips targeted at four main product segments: the desktop, mobile, workstation and server computers. Most of the major computer makers announced a variety of products designed around the chips, with various dates of availability.

The new manufacturing process enabled the first line of mobile computers using Pentium IIIs, because of the lower heat dissipation.

Another key feature of the new Pentium line, previously code-named Coppermine, is its advanced transfer cache technology, which resides on the chip and enables a performance boost of up to 25 percent, when compared with Pentium III processors running at the same clock speed.

On the older Pentium III line, the cache -- a temporary data storage point -- resided on its own cartridge, which also was more costly to manufacture.

Along with the new Pentium IIIs and the Pentium III Xeons for workstations and servers, Intel also introduced a new 840 chipset for the computer workstation and server markets, which uses the RDRAM technology for faster memory developed by Rambus Inc. of Mountain View, California.

However, the 820 chipset, which is developed for the desktop PC market, was still not available, after its launch was postponed last month, due to some glitches. Otellini said the 820 chipset will be shipping later this quarter, but he was not more specific.

"Things have accelerated at such a pace that they are having to flip their whole product line to a new process at once," said Joe Osha, an analyst at Merrill Lynch.

"Some of the hiccups notwithstanding, they have done a pretty good job."

Osha also said that Intel's pricing was a bit lower than he had been anticipating.

For example, the Pentium III running at 733 megahertz was priced at \$776, in quantities of 1,000. The Pentium III Xeon for servers and workstations, running at 733 megahertz, was priced at \$826 and the 500 megahertz Mobile Pentium III was priced at \$530, both in quantities of 1,000.

Microsoft Sets Windows 2000 D-Day

Microsoft will launch its long-awaited Windows 2000 product on Feb. 17,

2000, officials told partners attending Windows 2000 Marketing Day in Las Vegas this week.

The company will launch the product in San Francisco at IDG World Expo's Windows 2000 Conference and Expo trade show slated for February 15 through 17 at the Moscone Center, said sources. Word of Microsoft's plans to launch Windows 2000 in February began leaking out earlier this month.

Between now and the launch, Microsoft is set to deliver its third and final beta, Release Candidate 3, to a selected group of testers. A subset of the more than 650,000 RC2 testers--mostly those in Microsoft's Joint Deployment and Rapid Deployment corporate test programs--will receive RC3.

Microsoft will use Fall Comdex to tout RC3 and drum up "excitement and enthusiasm" for Windows 2000, officials told partners.

Microsoft still intends to release the final product to manufacturing before the end of calendar 1999. Officials told partners it looks like the product will go gold before Christmas.

While the Windows 2000 launch is not expected to rival in size or hype Windows 95's launch five years ago, Microsoft is planning to make Windows 2000 an international launch, officials told the estimated 600 attendees of its Las Vegas event.

Microsoft will emphasize four key marketing messages at the Windows 2000 launch, according to partner sources. These are the ability of Windows 2000 to "Internet-enable" businesses; its reliability; its manageability; and its status as the "best platform for new devices" because of its Plug And Play and streaming video support. Microsoft officials did not return requests for comment on its Windows 2000 launch plans by press time.

Can Marc Do It Again?

Less than two months after unceremoniously departing his America Online post, Web pioneer Marc Andreessen is preparing to launch his second Internet start-up, Sm@rt Reseller has learned. And he's assembled a killer management team, chock-full of former Netscape gurus and other Internet veterans, to catapult the company to success.

According to sources familiar with the new company's plans, Andreessen and his pals are charging full bore into the hosted application space, building a complete platform that'll comprise a database, application server, directory server and other critical elements. Essentially, the new company--code-named VCellar--will target Internet hosts and data-center providers, which would offer this back-end platform to dot-com start-ups.

While Andreessen and his colleagues are developing some pieces of the puzzle internally, other elements may be added through acquisition.

Andreessen & Co. isn't alone in targeting back-end infrastructure for hosted software. Microsoft, IBM, Oracle and other top software vendors have been pitching their back-end platforms to application service

providers (ASPs) and data-center vendors for several months. Those software giants also have been testing the software-rental waters by partnering with ASPs to offer elements of their respective back-end platforms on a rental basis.

Andreessen's hush-hush start-up currently is operating out of shared workspace in Menlo Park, Calif., according to one source. It is not known if VCellar will remain the company's name, but a member of the executive team has secured the Web address, www.vcellar.com, according to Internic records.

In a recent conversation with Sm@rt Reseller, Andreessen declined to comment on any unannounced projects or investments.

Regardless, answers should come soon, as the company's publicity launch is slated for the next week or two, according to multiple sources. After that, the start-up is expected to seek venture funding, with former Netscape boss Jim Barksdale's investment group likely chipping in some dough.

"Every VC wants a piece of this thing," says a source familiar with the company's plan.

A successful, high-profile launch could reestablish Andreessen's status as one of the Internet's top visionaries.

After co-founding Netscape in 1994 with Jim Clark and taking the company public in 1995, Andreessen came under heavy fire from Microsoft and sold his Internet powerhouse to America Online in late 1998. Andreessen surprised many observers by taking a role as chief technology officer at AOL--a company he seemed ill-fitted to serve because of corporate-culture differences.

But after less than six months in AOL's CTO role and another six-plus weeks off the public's radar screen, Andreessen is set to emerge as chairman of his new start-up. Meanwhile, longtime Netscape colleague Ben Horowitz will serve as CEO.

No one should be shocked with Horowitz's CEO title. Fiercely loyal to Andreessen, Horowitz told Sm@rt Reseller in February that Andreessen's decision to stay at AOL beyond the merger compelled Horowitz to stay.

"If Marc didn't stay, I'd probably leave and join the new company that Marc would inevitably start," Horowitz uncannily said at the time.

The new company also has snared former Netscape and AOL exec Timothy Howes, widely credited for authoring LDAP (the lightweight access directory access protocol), and In Sik Rhee, a seasoned veteran from Netscape's Kiva application-server division.

In addition, the start-up has lured Jonathan Heiliger, a 23-year-old Internet phenomenon from Frontier Ventures, the VC arm of Frontier Communications. Prior to his VC work, Heiliger served as CTO of Frontier GlobalCenter, developing the Web-hosting architecture used by clients like Yahoo.

When contacted by Sm@rt Reseller, Heiliger would not comment on the new venture, saying only that it was "an opportunity I could not pass up."

With the core staff seemingly in place, the company seems to be

well-positioned to pounce on the outsourced, back-end infrastructure market.

But VCellar will have its share of competitors. And, ironically, one of them, at least peripherally, is Microsoft. Moreover, a handful of back-end infrastructure providers--like USWeb/CKS--are targeting ASP outsourcing, too.

Competitors or not, Andreessen is about to get one more chance to knock that Redmond monkey off his back.

ExciteAtHome Buying Blue Mountain

ExciteAtHome, a leading Internet destination, is buying the Blue Mountain Arts electronic greeting card company for \$780 million, a deal that will broaden Excite's Web services by allowing visitors to send free messages customized for special occasions.

The purchase announced Monday was the latest salvo by a giant Web portal in the fight to attract more visitors and advertisers.

ExciteAtHome, the sixth largest Web destination, will take the No. 5 spot from Disney's Go Network with the addition of Blue Mountain's Internet traffic, according to the Media Metrix research firm. Excite also would gain exposure for its high-speed residential Internet access business.

Blue Mountain Arts Publishing Co.'s Web site is ranked No. 14 with 9.2 million visitors.

"This is just the first step in what will be a very aggressive set of steps for us," said Excite President George Bell.

Jared Schutz, executive director of Bluemountain.com, assured users that the popular electronic cards, which feature dancing and singing characters, will remain free of charge.

ExciteAtHome agreed to pay \$350 million in cash and issue about \$430 million in stock. The deal could include an additional payment of up to \$270 million in Excite stock if holiday traffic to bluemountain.com is strong. The deal is expected to be completed by year's end.

ExciteAtHome, based in Redwood City, Calif., was created earlier this year by the merger of Excite, an Internet search and directory service, and AtHome, which operates a network of fiber-optic cables.

Based in Boulder, Bluemountain.com is an extension of Blue Mountain Arts, an alternative greeting card company begun by Stephen and Susan Polis Schutz, who were flower children in the '60s.

Jared Schutz, their son, took the privately held tiny company into the high-tech age in 1996 by launching the Web site. Traffic peaked in February at 12.6 million users. Bluemountain.com's traffic typically increases sharply around the holidays.

Ken Goldman, Excite's chief financial officer, said Bluemountain.com presented a relatively inexpensive way to expand his company's reach.

Drew Ianni, an analyst with the Jupiter Communications research firm, said Excite officials will have to be careful about how they market their high-speed Internet access to customers who are used to getting free products from Bluemountain.com.

''When someone goes to Blue Mountain Arts, they're expecting to send a greeting card to a friend or a loved one and they're not expecting to be asked about their (Internet service provider) and whether they want to upgrade to broadband," he said.

''The mentality of the consumer is a lot different when the consumer is used to getting the product free," he said.

Bluemountain.com has more than 65 percent of the electronic greeting card market, Bell said. He described the site's users as very loyal and more likely than other Internet users to buy items online.

AOL Flagship Service Surpasses 19 Million Members

Internet media company America Online Inc. said Monday that worldwide membership of its flagship AOL service had topped 19 million, up 5 million from a year ago.

The leading online access and media company cited the growing popularity of shopping online and the back-to-school season for continued member growth and increased use of the site by members.

The fall is traditionally a time of rapid membership growth at AOL, as well as a yearly marketing push and software upgrade. This year AOL expects continued growth due to its new AOL 5.0 software, which among other things, allows for members to send photos.

This year's seasonal push is backed by commercials featuring pre-teens and seniors saying how easy the service is to use.

''Our rapid growth highlights the power of our mass-market brand and broad appeal of our service's convenience and ease-of-use," Bob Pittman, AOL's president and chief operating officer, said in a statement. ''We're confident that the AOL 5.0 experience will drive continued membership growth.

AOL members are averaging 55 minutes daily online, an increase of 8 minutes over one year ago, AOL said. Some 80 million e-mails are sent daily compared with 40 million a year ago. AOL said more than 11 million members now shop online.

AOL also operates CompuServe, positioned as a value brand at about half the price. There are more than 2.2 CompuServe members.

Caere To Discontinue Hardware Business

Caere Corp. announced plans Tuesday to discontinue its hardware business by the end of the year to focus on its software operations, including desktop scanner and digital camera products.

Caere said it will cease developing and marketing its automated data entry hardware products.

''Over the past year the older, transaction processing hardware business has been declining and we do not see this trend reversing itself," Bob Teresi, the company's chief executive officer, said in a statement.

The company expects to lay off about 36 employees at its Los Gatos headquarters.

The cost of exiting the hardware business will be treated as a discontinued operation, resulting in a fourth quarter write-off of between \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million for costs to cover employee reductions, facility consolidations, satisfaction of customer obligations, and write down of assets.

Tips for Avoiding Online Rip-Offs

Consumers are expected to spend billions of dollars shopping on the Internet this holiday season, and the American Bar Association is offering tips on how to avoid getting ripped off.

''We want to encourage people to shop online but do so in an informed manner," said Walter Effross, an American University law professor and chairman of an ABA panel on electronic commerce. ''If you don't feel right about buying a specific product online or from a particular Web site... then maybe you shouldn't."

The ABA unveiled a Web site - www.safeshopping.org - that outlines ways consumers can try to minimize their chances of running into trouble on the Internet.

Among the suggestions:

- Look for symbols indicating the Web site uses security technology to protect purchasers' credit card numbers.

- Pay by credit card instead of a debit card or check. Using a credit card provides more legal protection if a dispute arises.

- Read the Web site's privacy policy to find out what information the seller is gathering from you, whether it sells the information to other companies, and how consumers can opt out of such information-sharing. People might not want to deal with a Web site that lists no privacy policy, the ABA site suggested.

- Check the ''feedback" areas of online auction sites, where customers discuss their experiences with sellers.

- Read the warranty before buying an item and check for limits on the company's liability if something goes wrong with the item.

- Make a printout of the Web page, the item being purchased, the warranty and any messages between the buyer and seller. If the date doesn't appear on the printouts, add it in writing.

Online shoppers are expected to spend about \$9 billion on gifts during the coming holiday season, according to the market research company Harris Interactive of Rochester, N.Y. The company said about one-third of all people with Internet access are expected to buy something online this season, compared with about 8 percent last year.

''This holiday season many consumers will go on the Net for the first time for shopping," said Gail Hillebrand of Consumers Union. She said the vast majority of complaints about online transactions have been over items bought through Internet auctions.

''Your instinct tells you you shouldn't buy a diamond ring from a roadside vendor," said Thomas Vartanian, chairman of the ABA's cyberspace law committee, adding that people need to develop the same kinds of instincts for shopping online.

In addition to security of credit card numbers, he said people need to be alert for ''identity theft," in which someone uses another person's identity for a variety of transactions, such as taking out a loan.

''We can put a cop on every computer and we still will not eliminate fraud in cyberspace," Vartanian said.

The National Consumers League has announced its own educational campaign to help people stay out of trouble while shopping over the Internet.

A survey conducted for the group showed that most people who shopped online were pleased with the result, but one in five reported problems including products being misrepresented, products not being delivered, and unauthorized charges.

The survey showed only 10 percent of consumers were concerned that a seller might be fraudulent, although the consumers league said that actually was a bigger danger than credit card number theft.

''Consumers need to check out unfamiliar companies before doing business with them, online or offline," Susan Grant of the consumers league said last week. ''You can't judge them simply on the basis of a nice-looking Web site."

You Want Cookies on Your Computer?

Q: I keep hearing that some Web sites leave ''cookies" on the hard drive of a personal computer. What are they, and should I allow my PC to accept them?

A: A ''cookie" is a small file that a Web site deposits on your hard disk, often with a unique number that identifies you. The next time you go back to that site, the computer will know it's you.

Cookies can make browsing more convenient by allowing sites to ''remember" how you like to view pages, what sorts of things you like to look at, and so on. If it's a site that requires a user name and password, accepting a cookie can allow the site to remember who you are so you don't have to log in every time you visit.

Despite the conveniences they offer, cookies have raised concerns among

advocates for electronic privacy who say they can be used to track personal information and preferences about Web surfers, such as which other sites they visit.

“People feel that on the Internet they’re fairly anonymous, but cookies are one of the ways that are whittling down that anonymity,” says Ethan Preston, a legal researcher for the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, D.C.

To see what kind of cookies your browser has accepted, do a search for files containing the word “cookie.” You should find a set of files from different Web pages with some numbers in them.

Jason Catlett, founder and president of Junkbusters Corp., a privacy advocacy group in Green Brook, N.J., says it’s nearly impossible to tell just from the cookie what kind of information the Web site has stored about you, since often times all the cookie contains is a set of numbers used to identify you, kind of like a bar code.

But Catlett cautions that online advertising firms can build up profiles of Web users by tracking what kind of sites they visit and sending the information back to the advertising firm’s computer.

“Cookies can be used to customize sites, but they can also be used for surveillance,” he says, opening the way for marketers to target you based on information gleaned from your online profile.

You can slow down the intrusion of cookies by instructing your browser to only accept cookies that are sent back to the originating site, and not forwarded to a third party. You also can block cookies entirely, but you may find it inconvenient to remember all those passwords for Web sites.

You can usually change these settings under your browser’s “preferences” menu. For more help, look at Junkbuster’s Web site, www.junkbusters.com.

Finally, in case you were wondering, the term “cookie” comes from computer science terminology and was not cooked up in a marketing lab, Catlett says.

FEC To Offer Campaign Web Rules

Diving into the uncharted waters of Internet politics, the Federal Election Commission Thursday began deciding what rules should be followed by Web sites set up independently of any political campaign.

In addition, the FEC plans to seek the public’s suggestions for future regulations governing use of the Internet for political campaigns.

“We’re getting into the new frontier here,” FEC spokesman Ron Harris said.

The commissioners discussed what criteria individuals must follow if they want to set up their own Web sites, independent of a campaign, to tout or oppose a particular candidate.

The discussion came in response to two requests for advisory opinions,

including one from Texas Gov. George W. Bush's presidential campaign. Commissioners appeared to disagree over whether it was best to only answer the narrow questions posed or offer broader guidance on Internet use in politics.

"Many people have a lot of questions," said commissioner Karl Sandstrom. "We best approach these one at a time. I'm going to be very supportive of allowing volunteers to engage in this activity."

Chairman Scott Thomas said that if the commission was going to stick to narrow rulings, he hoped others would pepper the FEC with more questions.

"I hope those in the audience encourage someone to give us other requests if there is a problem," Thomas said. "We would be well-served to get the questions answered as soon as possible."

Commissioners are considering an FEC staff proposal that would instruct campaigns they do not have to report as contributions Internet sites that offer a link to the candidate's own site - so long as the individual offering the link was doing it independent of the campaign and working from a personal computer.

The issue was brought before the FEC by Bush's presidential committee, which said it had discovered several independent pro-Bush sites.

Also on the agenda was the question of whether the Democracy Network, which is partially supported by the League of Women Voters, could provide nonpartisan information about federal candidates on the Web, including links to the candidates' Internet sites. Candidates would be invited to respond to e-mail and provide information about their positions on issues. The Democracy Network Web site will be part of America Online's Election 2000 coverage.

The FEC is considering a proposal to allow the Web site to operate without falling under federal limits on contributions or expenditures, since it does not support or oppose a particular candidate.

"The Web site is a new type of multifaceted vehicle, owing in large part to the technology involved," the staff's proposed opinion said.

Net Campaign Issues Remain Unresolved

Election regulators failed to set clearer guidelines for political Web sites today, leaving questions unanswered about whether Web sites must be reported as campaign contributions.

With the Net playing a wide-ranging role in politics, from being a forum for debates to a mechanism for campaign fund-raising, the Federal Election Commission has been deliberating how its existing rules for television and print advertisements apply to the global network.

The FEC's meeting agenda today included several advisory opinions to address some of these issues, including an inquiry by Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush. The Republican front-runner wants to know if volunteer Web sites supporting his campaign, whether they are officially affiliated with him or not, need to be tallied as campaign contributions. If Web sites must be counted, it could push candidates over

their spending limits.

Although the commission decided today to send the opinion back to the drawing board, the draft to Bush seemed to be a departure from an opinion issued earlier this year; the latest opinion states that Web sites established by campaign volunteers aren't considered contributions.

"If a volunteer for the campaign chooses to prepare a Web site supporting the campaign using his or her personal property at home, i.e., a home computer, that action would not be a contribution," the draft opinion to Bush states. "Further, the ongoing related costs, such as maintaining Internet service with a provider, that are part of the upkeep of a home-run Web site would also fall into this exception."

Free speech advocates hope that the FEC reporting exemption will include all sites that include political opinions--not just those of official campaign volunteers.

"[The draft opinion] is good news for the organized campaigns and their official 'volunteers,' but it leaves in legal limbo the person who does not wish to affiliate with a campaign as a 'volunteer'" but still wants to speak his or her political mind," Ari Schwartz of the Center for Democracy and Technology stated in an analysis of the draft today.

"As matters now stand, the ordinary citizen who is not a 'volunteer' remains potentially subject to the campaign finance law, and his or her Web site may be subject to regulation," he added.

Schwartz referred to a November 1998 opinion that lumped the Net in with rules for TV advertisements and campaign finance reporting. The opinion dealt with a Web site erected by Leo Smith of Suffield, Connecticut, who advocated the defeat of the Rep. Nancy Johnson (R-Connecticut) and endorsed her opponent, Democratic candidate Charlotte Koskoff.

In reference to Smith, the commission concluded that Web sites endorsing or soliciting funds for federal candidates are considered political advertisements and fall under the disclaimer and reporting requirements. Thus, sites such as Smith's would have to disclose who is behind the site and report expenditures for erecting the site if they exceed \$250, including the cost of hardware and software to build and host the site.

Public inquiry expected The conflicting opinions regarding volunteer Web sites underscore the need for clearer rules regarding Net campaigns. This need is not lost on the FEC. Commissioner David Mason today is expected to call a vote to kick-start a public inquiry into how the Net is changing the political process, which could lead to an official rule-making procedure.

"The commissioners are apparently ready to tackle these issues," said FEC press officer Ron Harris. "The advisory opinions are only case specific, and they don't have the force of rule-making, but they are often referred to and used as precedents."

In addition to campaign sites, nonpartisan political sites are another issue the FEC plans to address.

An opinion on the agenda today concerns the nonprofit and nonpartisan Democracy Network (DNet), which has been holding online political debates since 1996 and provides an array of election materials and news. DNet was established by the League of Women Voters Education Fund and the Center for Governmental Studies.

The FEC's draft opinion states that DNet's activities, such as distributing voter pamphlets, encouraging voter registration, and giving official candidates equal time during debates, fall under exceptions for the "general public."

"The commission cautions, however, that there are certain circumstances that may result in concluding that there has been express advocacy by DNet," the draft states.

For example, the commission suggested that DNet could lose its exemption if it does not provide an accurate sampling of newspaper editorials endorsing candidates and therefore appears to endorse one candidate over another.

But DNet claims that the concerns are unwarranted, as it gives every candidate a fair shake.

"Candidates may directly post statements on the Web site in response to any perceived injustices on the Web site," DNet's attorney, Trevor Potter, stated in an October 20 letter to the FEC. "DNet rules are formally and completely neutral: Candidates all have a 1,000-word limit, and their position is solely dependent on their order of entry or update."

The FEC's move this week follows other Net campaign decisions.

In June, the commission updated its federal contribution matching rules to include credit card donations made via the Net. And in another opinion regarding the Secretary of State for Minnesota's Web site, the FEC concluded that nonpartisan Web sites that link to candidate sites do not have to report expenditures.

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